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Official Records

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Tuesday, 11 October 1994, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Essy ..... (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Tentative programme of work

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/INF/49/5/Add.1, which contains a tentative programme of work and schedule of plenary meetings for the months of October and November. The addendum supersedes document A/INF/49/5. I should like to point out that this schedule is being issued as early as possible in order to assist delegations in planning their work. For its part, the Secretariat will endeavour to ensure that the relevant documentation will be available to delegations ahead of the discussion of any given agenda item.

I should further point out that there are still a few agenda items for which no date has been indicated. I will announce the dates for the consideration of those agenda items in due course and sufficiently in advance. I will also keep the Assembly informed of any additions or changes.

The list of speakers for each of the items listed in document A/INF/49/5/Add.1 is now open.

Further, I should like to inform representatives that the Pledging Conference for Development Activities will be held on Tuesday, 1 November, and Wednesday, 2 November, in the morning. I should also like to inform members that the announcement of voluntary contributions to the 1995 programme of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will take place on Friday, 11 November, in the morning.

As I mentioned to the Assembly last week, I hope to keep as close as possible to this schedule so that the Assembly can discharge its responsibilities in an effective fashion. I therefore appeal to those representatives submitting draft resolutions to do so sufficiently in advance of the dates fixed for consideration of items in order to give members adequate time to examine them.

I should also like to remind representatives that additional time is needed for those draft resolutions involving changes in the work programme or additional expenditures, since these will require the preparation of a statement of programme-budget implications by the Secretary-General. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee will need adequate time to review the programme-budget implications of a draft resolution before the latter can be acted on by the Assembly.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I call first on the Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uganda, His Excellency Mr. Paul Ssemogerere.

Mr. Ssemogerere (Uganda): Permit me, Sir, on behalf of the Uganda delegation, to congratulate you most warmly on your well-deserved unanimous election to the

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presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. Your election is a recognition by our Organization of your exemplary personal qualities. It is, indeed, a great honour to your country, Côte d'Ivoire, with which Uganda enjoys warm fraternal relations. I am confident that, with your skills and experience, you will be able to guide our deliberations to a successful conclusion. I wish to pledge Uganda's full support and cooperation to you in your endeavours.

I also wish to pay special tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Samuel Insanally of Guyana, for the able manner in which he steered the work of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

Our appreciation goes to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his courageous and clear-sighted leadership of the Organization.

At the outset, let me say how warmly Uganda welcomes the presence in our midst of a new South Africa, born on the principles of equality, justice and democratic governance. I wish to pay a special tribute to His Excellency President Nelson Mandela and other leaders of the South African liberation movements, and to Mr. de Klerk, for their vision and statesmanship, which enabled the United Nations to achieve one of the key long-sought objectives of Africa.

Since the last session of the General Assembly, several developments have taken place in the international arena; some of these have offered hope and encouragement, while others have led to frustration and despair. In many countries, peace, the rule of law and democratic governance are being consolidated. However, in some others, such as Angola, Somalia, Liberia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, conflicts have caused untold suffering, loss of life and destruction of property, and have contributed to the staggering numbers of refugees and displaced persons, with the attendant negative consequences.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates the number of refugees and displaced persons worldwide to be over 23 million and 26 million respectively. Africa is estimated to have over 32 per cent and Asia over 25 per cent of the total refugees. Seven countries in Africa are among the top 10 countries of origin of refugees. Most of these refugees and displaced persons have fled as a consequence of conflicts, mainly within nations, but to a lesser extent between nations. This is a vivid, awesome picture for Africa in particular, and for developing countries in general.

Uganda welcomes the increasing priority attention being given by the United Nations to the resolution of conflicts in Africa and elsewhere, especially the emphasis given by the Secretary-General in "An Agenda for Peace" to preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. We agree with his view that security, socio-economic well-being, environmental sustainability and the protection of human rights are closely interdependent and interlocked in a mutually reinforcing manner. They should therefore be addressed in tandem in order to avert conflicts and their attendant negative effects, such as the outflow of political and economic refugees, capital flight and brain-drain.

We welcome the establishment of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. Such a mechanism is useful for confidence-building among rival parties and can facilitate peaceful resolution of conflicts. Uganda is committed to making the OAU Mechanism effective and usable. We urge the United Nations and the international community to lend it the requisite support.

The situation in Somalia remains tense and fragile with serious negative implications for peace, national reconciliation and orderly provision of humanitarian assistance. Uganda supports the new emphasis by the international community on seeking a political settlement to the Somalia conflict. Uganda urges all Somali groups and factions to put behind them fear and mistrust, and to begin to implement all commitments they undertook in the Nairobi Declaration on National Reconciliation in order to pave the way for the implementation of the Addis Ababa Agreements, including the establishment of transitional administrative mechanisms. We commend the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) for facilitating the flow of humanitarian assistance and we urge continued international support to Somalia.

As regards Liberia, Uganda was encouraged by steps taken to begin the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement, namely the establishment of the Liberia National Transitional Government and the initiation of the process of disarmament and demobilization of various combatants. However, we are disappointed by the increasingly tense military situation on the ground, both within and between parties, which has brought the process of disarmament and demobilization to a virtual standstill. We urge all parties to show seriousness to the

process of peace and national reconciliation as this is vital for continued international support and a continued presence.

Uganda welcomes steps taken so far by the Government of Mozambique and RENAMO to implement the general peace agreement. We urge the parties to remain committed to the peace agreement and to respect the outcome of the elections scheduled for 27 and 28 October 1994. We commend the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (UNOMOZ), which has helped to engender confidence among the parties — vital for the successful implementation of the peace agreement — and we urge continued international assistance to Mozambique, especially in the resettlement of refugees and displaced persons.

The situation in Angola remains a matter of concern to the international community despite ongoing Lusaka negotiations between the Government of Angola and UNITA. The people of Angola continue to suffer from indiscriminate killings and destruction of property. My delegation urges the parties concerned, especially UNITA, to demonstrate flexibility, realism, political will, tolerance and compromise, which are necessary for peace and national reconciliation.

The civil war in southern Sudan has continued to escalate, with an enormous loss of lives, destruction of property and a large number of refugees and displaced persons. Uganda alone hosts an estimated 300,000 Sudanese refugees. We urge the parties to the conflict to set their sights on the common good and mutual accommodation in the ongoing regional efforts — in particular, the Inter-Governmental Authority for Drought and Development (IGADD) initiative — which are aimed at finding a durable political settlement.

As regards Western Sahara, Uganda is concerned at the slow progress towards the holding of a United Nations supervised referendum on self-determination of the people of that territory. We appeal to the parties to overcome their differences and enable a just and impartial referendum to be effected.

The systematic and widespread massacres of civilians which took place in Rwanda were tragic and deplorable. Uganda supports the setting up by the Secretary-General, on 29 July 1994, of an impartial commission of experts to investigate violations of international humanitarian law and acts of genocide committed in Rwanda with a view to identifying persons responsible for those violations and bringing them to justice. This should contribute to the process of national reconciliation. We are encouraged by the declaration of the Government in Rwanda that it will be guided by the spirit of the Arusha Peace Agreement as a framework for peace and national reconciliation and for its support for the regional initiatives on the problem of Rwandese refugees. Similarly, we also appeal for assistance to be extended to local populations in neighbouring countries that are hosting the refugees, in order to mitigate the adverse socio-economic and environmental effects they are facing as a result of the influx of refugees.

Uganda congratulates the Governments of South Africa and Namibia for settling, through peaceful means, their long-standing dispute over Walvis Bay and the offshore islands.

Uganda notes the flexibility shown by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya with regard to implementation of Security Council resolution 731 (1992). We hope that this will contribute to a peaceful resolution of the problem.

Uganda welcomes the initiation of Palestine self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho. We commend Chairman Arafat and Prime Minister Rabin for their political steadfastness, which made this possible. We encourage them to continue working together to resolve all outstanding issues for the full implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). We appeal to the international community to provide increased assistance to Palestine which is needed for reconstruction and development.

We express our satisfaction over the signing by Jordan and Israel of the Washington Declaration by which the two countries mutually agreed to end the state of war between them. This should go a long way in helping to build confidence, facilitating the normalization of relations, concluding a formal peace treaty between the two countries and between Israel and other countries in the region.

Uganda supports efforts with a view to the peaceful resolution of the problem in the Korean peninsula and urges all parties to work together to create an atmosphere that will help ease the tension and that is conducive to negotiating a durable political settlement of the Korean problem.

Uganda welcomes the developments in Haiti directed towards the return of President Aristide and the

restoration of a democratically elected Government in that country.

Uganda is deeply concerned over the continuing genocide and "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We urge the United Nations and the international community to act decisively and to take appropriate steps to end hostilities in accordance with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as the peace plan of the Contact Group and to create an environment conducive to a smooth and timely flow of humanitarian assistance to the people affected.

Uganda is encouraged by some positive developments that have taken place in the area of disarmament. We note the ongoing formal negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty (CTBT), under the auspices of the Conference on Disarmament, and urge successful completion of the CTBT prior to the convening of the Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be held early in 1995. As a State Party to the NPT, and in the context of the preparatory process and review of the Treaty, Uganda will seek the removal of all imbalances in the NPT and the securing of adequate technical assistance for developing countries in the peaceful application of nuclear technology. We also note the progress that is being made to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction through measures such as mandatory data exchanges and periodic on-site visits. These measures are useful in engendering confidence in compliance and in helping minimize violations of the Convention. We are also encouraged by the possibility of the entry into force in mid-1995 of the 1993 chemical weapons Convention.

The treaty on an African nuclear-free zone will be yet another important landmark for peace in Africa. Uganda urges its timely and successful conclusion.

It is imperative to consolidate achievements so far recorded in the area of nuclear testing and non-proliferation in order to lay firm ground on which to make progress in other new and more challenging areas of disarmament.

Uganda is committed to the full respect and universal enjoyment of human rights. We reaffirm our support for the Declaration and Programme of Action on human rights, and welcome the appointment of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. For its part, Uganda has established a human rights national focal point within the Justice Department aimed at enhancing public awareness and developing national capacity in the observance and promotion of human rights in the country. My delegation wishes to pay special tribute to all countries that have extended support to Uganda in this vital area of our development, and we appeal for continued support.

Uganda is committed to democracy, good governance and the rule of law. A democratization process in the country is well under way. The Constituent Assembly was successfully elected on 28 March 1994. The Assembly is currently debating a draft constitution, which is expected to be finalized and promulgated by the end of 1994. That will be followed by nationwide presidential and legislative elections in early 1995.

Uganda is concerned about the current trends in the global economy which continue to weigh unfavourably on many developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Excruciating external indebtedness remains a major impediment to our development. Many of our countries are spending large proportions of meagre export earnings on debt-servicing alone. For instance, as of 30 June 1994 Uganda had a total external public sector debt of $2.99 billion — over 80 per cent of estimated gross domestic product for the 1993-1994 financial year. Contractual debt-servicing was $185 million — almost 76 per cent of export earnings; while arrears to be cleared were $222 million — or 91 per cent of export earnings. The situation is compounded by the fact that 77 per cent of the total stock of debt, which is the portion owed to multilateral and bilateral institutions, is currently ineligible for restructuring or reduction.

The problem of external indebtedness is further aggravated by unfavourable terms of trade, especially the collapse of our export commodity prices, severely contracted resource inflows and limited access to technology. In addition to these unfavourable conditions, most of our countries are implementing stringent economic reforms, with their attendant adverse socio-economic implications for our people. This notwithstanding, some countries, including Uganda, are registering positive economic growth and controlling inflation.

For economic reforms to succeed in our countries, all creditors, including multilateral institutions, should adopt enhanced measures that go beyond debt-rescheduling in order to bring about a substantial

reduction in our total stock of debt. Such measures should include substantial debt cancellation or conversion into grants and/or other innovative schemes such as the use of reserves, a new issue of special drawing rights and debt swaps. In this regard Uganda endorses the conclusion of the recent Jakarta Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting on "Debt and Development: Sharing of Experiences" and also endorses the recent proposal by the British Chancellor of the Exchequer on measures to resolve the debt problem of the poorest countries.

Equally, there is a need significantly to increase resource in-flows to our countries — for example, through increased levels of official development assistance; foreign direct investment in areas such as manufacturing, agricultural processing and tourism; and the provision of remunerative commodity prices. Uganda, in the context of the preparatory process and next year's mid-term global review of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, will also seek the adoption of similar measures in favour of the least developed countries.

As regards the Uruguay Round, Uganda urges that in the implementation of the provisions of the Final Act special offsetting measures be adopted to obviate adverse effects that are likely to arise from the erosion of special preferences currently enjoyed by some developing countries under arrangements such as the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries and Lomé IV. Further, the way should be eased for more developing countries to gain increased access to international markets for their products, in order to augment their export earnings. We also urge that the necessary assistance be provided to enhance our capacity to produce value-added goods and services for international markets.

The Secretary-General's "Agenda for Development", which has been submitted to this session of the General Assembly, provides a useful framework for political dialogue between the North and the South on practical measures to make operational the international policies, programmes and actions on development which have so far been adopted by the international community. My delegation supports this initiative. As we elaborate on the Agenda, we should be guided by the overall objective of effecting a substantial, rapid improvement in the quality of life in developing countries, through the eradication of poverty and the provision of basic needs, namely, nutrition, shelter, health and education. Equally, we endorse the proposal made by Brazil for the convening of a United Nations conference on development some time in 1996.

Uganda welcomed the fact that the General Assembly, in its resolution 48/214 on the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, agreed to address the full range of issues related to the diversification of African economies, with particular attention to be given to the issue of the establishment of a diversification fund for African commodities. Uganda attaches great importance to the establishment of such a fund. We appeal to our developed partners to be understanding and flexible in the negotiations in order to enable the facility to be put in place as soon as possible.

The international economic system dictates that we enlarge our economic horizons beyond national boundaries in order to widen our markets. Uganda welcomes the coming into force, of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, which provides a useful framework for coordination of African development efforts at the continental level. In order to succeed, efforts to be pursued at subregional levels should be well coordinated and rationalized. Uganda is committed to full implementation of the Treaty for the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Arusha Treaty on revived East African cooperation. We appeal to the international community to provide requisite assistance to support our regional integration efforts in order to strengthen or create infrastructures that facilitate the movement of goods and services.

Uganda reaffirms its support for Agenda 21 and other agreements on sustainable development adopted in Rio de Janeiro. However, it is necessary that the Rio political momentum be translated into practical measures to implement all commitments agreed upon, especially with regard to the provision of financial resources and the transfer of technology to developing countries. For its part, Uganda is committed to addressing all causes and effects of environmental degradation, particularly poverty. For instance, we are sparing no efforts in seeking ways and means to exploit our enormous potential in hydroelectric power and solar energy, which are environmentally sound and are economic alternatives to wood fuels. This will help stem the current widespread forest depletion. We appeal to the international community to support our efforts in the area of sustainable development.

The most important outcome of the Cairo Conference on population was the endorsement of the view that the problem of population is not just a question of numbers; rather, the critical issue is that of human

development and welfare. In this regard, the challenge is to improve people's standard of living in such areas as the provision of education and health, housing, transportation, clean water and sanitation, and to eradicate poverty. In developing countries especially, population problems that arise from irresponsible parenthood are ultimately a result of socio-economic despair and ignorance, and these demand our foremost attention.

As a follow-up to the 1990 Programme of Action on children, Uganda has established the National Council for Children to oversee national activities aimed at their protection, promotion and development.

We support the convening of the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development in March 1995 to address issues of poverty- eradication, productive employment and social integration, which we hope will lead to the improvement of standards of living, especially in the most impoverished countries. We also support the convening of the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 to devise measures for the enhancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Uganda will continue to participate actively in the preparatory processes of both meetings.

The reform of the Security Council, in our view, should aim at achieving greater transparency in its methods of work, making it more democratic in decision-making and reflective of the increased United Nations membership in its composition. We therefore support the proposal to expand its membership. However, in our view, its expansion should increase the number of seats for developing countries on an equitable regional basis, to reflect the increased membership of developing countries in the United Nations and the fact that the agenda of the Security Council is increasingly dominated by issues of concern and interest to developing countries, such as conflict-resolution and humanitarian emergencies. As regards the Council's decision-making procedures, our view is that a proportionate number of developing countries, including African countries, should be accorded rights and responsibilities similar to those currently exercised by permanent members of the Security Council.

Our legacy to future generations is to put in place a firm institutional framework that can adequately and equitably respond to the interests and concerns of all mankind, rich and poor alike. This is the challenge that faces our Organization as we enter the fiftieth anniversary year of the United Nations.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, His Excellency Mr. Ohn Gyaw.

Mr. Gyaw (Myanmar): The delegation of Myanmar would like to congratulate you most warmly, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session and to assure you of our fullest cooperation in the discharge of your responsibilities. We are confident that the wealth of experience and wisdom that you bring with you will prove invaluable in guiding us successfully through the present session.

We also wish to express our appreciation to the outgoing President, His Excellency Mr. Samuel Rudolph Insanally, for his sagacious and outstanding stewardship of the previous session of the General Assembly.

In South Africa, four decades of the despicable system of apartheid have finally been laid to rest. The election of President Nelson Mandela by the country's first multiracial Parliament has given birth to a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa. A nation that has so courageously overcome such adversity and overwhelming pressure deserves our support and acclaim as it faces its future with optimism. I am pleased to see the delegation of South Africa rejoining us in this Assembly. Its presence here reflects the momentous changes taking place in the world today. The concerted effort to abolish apartheid in South Africa has finally succeeded. We welcome our brothers from South Africa, wish them every success in rebuilding their nation and look forward to working closely with their Government and people.

The importance of adhering to the five principles of peace coexistence that form the basic tenets of Myanmar's foreign policy bears reiteration. Myanmar, together with the People's Republic of China and India, enunciated those principles nearly five decades ago. These time-tested principles have crystallized as the universally accepted legal norms of inter-State relations. In strict observance of these principles, Myanmar has never allowed, and will never allow, its territory to be used as a springboard for action or threats against another State. By the same token, Myanmar expects that other nations will likewise abide by these principles in their conduct of policy towards Myanmar.

At this time of dramatic and profound changes, the United Nations represents the best hope for mankind in

the maintenance of international peace and security and in the promotion of international cooperation in other areas of human endeavour. Whatever character and shape the emerging new international order may eventually assume, we have no doubt that the United Nations will constitute a vital element in that new order and will continue to play an increasingly important role in international relations. As we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, it is the appropriate time for us to rededicate ourselves to the purposes and principles of the Charter and to redouble our efforts to further strengthen the role of the world Organization. In order to mark this auspicious anniversary in a fitting manner, we have formed a high-level National Committee in my country to carry out necessary preparatory work and to coordinate commemorative activities at the national level.

Myanmar firmly believes that the United Nations plays a pivotal role in promoting international cooperation for development and for the maintenance of peace and security. There is a close link between peace and development; it is therefore the view of my delegation that the Agenda for Peace and the Agenda for Development must go hand in hand. Now that the cold war is over and the avenues for peace and development are more pronounced, we would like to call upon the international community to create a favourable environment that ensures sustainable development.

My delegation shares the view that at the present time the search for security and peace in the world lies in development, not in armaments. For most people throughout the world, and particularly in developing countries, any feeling of insecurity arises more out of anxieties about daily subsistence than out of the dread of a cataclysmic global conflict. Underdevelopment creates poverty, hunger, malnutrition, environmental degradation and so on, collectively leading to civil strife, ethnic conflicts and, eventually, the collapse of peace and security. These problems may in some instances be confined within national borders; however, some will definitely have international and even global ramifications and consequences.

Both "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development" are top-priority tasks facing the United Nations, and they deserve equal attention and equal allocation of resources. United Nations peace-keeping missions are stretched out across the globe, and United Nations agencies for development and humanitarian affairs fan out over an even wider area. Myanmar shares the view that economic and social developments are prerequisites for lasting peace and security. We would therefore like to see a strengthening of the Economic and Social Council in tandem with the call for a restructuring of the Security Council to respond adequately to the new challenges of international peace and security that have emerged in the wake of the cold war. Fifty years ago, against a political background that was very different from today's, the United Nations was born with the purposes of maintaining international peace and security, promoting development and safeguarding human rights. Now that the cold war is over and the international community is free from the super-Power rivalry that so crippled the United Nations in the past, the Organization should be restructured to meet the needs and challenges of the present-day world.

Peace-keeping is an area in which the United Nations is being called to take on increasing responsibilities. These operations constitute an important instrument of the world Organization in the prevention and containment of conflicts and in keeping peace where it is most needed. Peace-keeping operations have a mixed record of successes and some set-backs. Experience and lessons from past operations should be carefully reviewed and re-evaluated to ensure the more effective and proper conduct of such operations. It is imperative that United Nations peace-keeping operations be carried out only with the consent and willing cooperation of the parties concerned and that all aspects of such operations strictly conform to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. There is also a need for such operations to be rationalized, streamlined and made more cost effective.

In the field of disarmament we are encouraged by the positive developments of last year. Intensive negotiations are now under way in the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament to achieve a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. The steadily increasing trust and confidence between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States has provided an opportunity for the international community to come to grips with the prevention of the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. This opportunity should be seized by bringing the negotiations on the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty to a successful conclusion in the most expeditious way. The United States has announced its decision to extend the moratorium for one year until September 1995. We believe that such a moratorium, if also observed by other nuclear-weapon States, would create conditions conducive to the ongoing process of negotiating a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

The review and extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is less than a year away. We are of the view that substantive progress in crucial areas, namely the comprehensive test-ban treaty, negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States and a ban on the production of nuclear fissile material in all its aspects, will contribute to a successful outcome of the review Conference. A careful evaluation of the progress achieved in these crucial areas should be made before taking a decision at the review Conference on the further extension of the Treaty. Myanmar looks forward to working and cooperating with other delegations for the successful outcome of the 1995 review and extension Conference.

While I am on the subject of the NPT, may I take this opportunity to inform the Assembly that, as a State Party to the Treaty, the Myanmar Government has decided to sign the International Atomic Energy Agency Safeguards Agreement and Protocol. The signing of the Agreement and Protocol will take place in the near future.

Myanmar is also actively taking part in the preparatory process for the implementation of the chemical weapons Convention since becoming an original signatory to it. Like other signatories to the Convention, the ratification process is currently under way in Myanmar.

The signature on 4 May 1994 of the agreement to implement the Israel-Palestine Declaration of Principles marks an important milestone towards a lasting peace in the Middle East. The recent approval by the Israeli Cabinet of the transfer of civilian powers to the Palestinians in the areas of culture, youth and sports, international cooperation, education, health, social welfare, tourism and finance is another positive step that will further pave the way to self-rule by the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and Jericho. We congratulate the parties concerned for their courage and mutual accommodation. We are also heartened to note that both Israel and Jordan are implementing the Washington Declaration signed by both parties in July. It is hoped that these initiatives, in the context of both bilateral and multilateral negotiations, will facilitate and brighten the chances of lasting peace in the Middle East.

After years of recession and stagnation the world economy has resumed a modest growth. However, the recovery remains fragile and uneven, and it is in the interests of both developing and developed countries to strive for accelerated growth and sustainable development. While a number of developing countries have acted as the main engines of world economic growth, most of them are beset by a deteriorating economic and social situation. Developed countries are also facing slow growth and high unemployment. In this era of growing globalization and interdependence, concerted efforts by the world community are urgently needed to resolve the acute economic and social problems.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report, "An Agenda for Development", as most timely and appropriate. The report has highlighted economic growth as a crucial dimension of development and has singled out a supportive and favourable international economic environment for sustained growth. We fully share the view that the advancement of developing countries is being hindered by such obstacles as external-debt problems, declining external resource flows, sharply deteriorating terms of trade and mounting barriers to market access. We hope that the programme of action on the implementation of the agenda will be agreed upon at this session.

Our aspirations for a new world economic order which is equitable and non-discriminatory have not yet been realized. The major challenges of these decades — acceleration of development, alleviation of poverty, narrowing the widening gap among countries — need to be addressed on an urgent basis. We fully support the call by the Group of 77, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Assembly for the resumption of the stalled North-South dialogue. A constructive dialogue based on common interests and mutual benefits should enhance international economic cooperation for development.

We also welcome the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round, although our aspirations were not fully realized. We had hoped for an open, equitable and transparent multilateral trading system which would benefit all countries. We are most concerned with new forms of protectionism, particularly the attempts to impose social and environmental conditions that discriminate against exports from developing countries. These protectionist measures will adversely affect world trade and growth.

We are heartened by the Communiqué issued following the Naples Summit of the Group of Seven, which states that the Seven will continue efforts to enhance development assistance, trade and investment in developing countries. It states also that the Seven favour a reduction in the stock of debt and an increase in

concessionality for those countries facing special difficulties.

My delegation notes with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General on the status and role of cooperatives in the light of new economic and social trends and welcomes the recommendations contained therein. Today, cooperative societies constitute significant components of the economies of developed and developing countries alike and play a crucial role in their economic development.

In my country, we attach great importance to the cooperative sector as one of the main pillars of our economy and as an effective means of accelerating socio-economic development. It is an important part of the economic strategy of the Myanmar Government to promote and expand the cooperative sector in our national economy. As we shall next year be celebrating the centenary of the establishment of the International Cooperative Alliance, it is most fitting that the Assembly should proclaim the first Saturday of July 1995 the International Day of Cooperatives and that Member States should observe this day in future years as an annual event.

The Earth Summit held in Rio two years ago firmly placed environmental issues on the global agenda, and since then hardly any international meeting has taken place without calls for common action to save our planet. The protection and promotion of the environment has emerged as one of the most pressing issues facing the world. No longer is the natural world perceived as a vast and inexhaustible frontier to be explored and exploited. Today there is growing recognition that the environment is not to be subjugated, but is to be treated with respect and care. An increasing number of countries now recognize that environmental issues warrant as much attention and effort as issues such as disarmament, narcotics and human rights.

Myanmar is pleased to note that, in all of this, the region of Asia and the Pacific has not been left behind. A regional meeting to prepare for the 1995 report on the state of the environment was held in Yangon in July this year. This meeting provided senior Government officials with an opportunity to discuss, in an integrated manner, issues related to the assessment of the state of the environment at the national and regional levels.

The region of Asia and the Pacific comprises a large number of nations differing in size, resource endowment and stage of economic development. It is a region facing all the conceivable environmental problems of the world - deforestation, desertification, climate change, and so on. While several countries of the region, particularly those in South-East and North-East Asia, have registered remarkable economic growth in the last few decades; others have yet to achieve their objectives.

In many of our countries the eradication of poverty and greater equity in income distribution remain major challenges. Poverty and environmental degradation are closely related. Therefore, the alleviation of poverty is no longer simply a moral issue; it is a practical imperative. At the same time, achieving sustainable development will require that all countries, particularly the developed countries, change their consumption patterns.

In the past we have tended to focus more on remedial measures than on the causes of environmental degradation. But if we are to overcome the challenges that we face we must deal with the underlying causes. As in the case of health care, prevention is just as important as, if not more important than, cure. We must therefore formulate strategies that will set out to alleviate poverty and provide the basic needs — food, water, clothing, shelter, energy and health care — of our peoples, while protecting the environment.

Aware of the fact that poverty is the fundamental cause of environmental degradation, we in Myanmar are concentrating on breaking the vicious circle of poverty and environmental degradation. With a view to remedying the situation, the Government launched in 1989 a programme for the development of border areas and national races. This integrated approach is expected to generate higher incomes and productivity by providing employment opportunities and increased welfare.

The border areas, which are inhabited by the national races, have lagged far behind in all aspects of development, owing mainly to the difficult terrain and the lack of an adequate infrastructure. However, the situation is being improved rapidly. There is extensive building of roads, bridges, schools, hospitals and reservoirs. The Government's support for the development of mini-plants to generate hydroelectric power will result in the provision of alternative sources of energy, which will enable towns and villages to promote rural industries and, at the same time, lessen their dependence on fuel wood.

This integrated rural-area-development programme will not only have positive effects on the socio-economic environment but also drastically reduce the area under shifting cultivation. The result will be conservation and

the regeneration of forest resources in the fragile mountain ecosystem.

The sustainable management and conservation of forests has long occupied a place of pride in Myanmar's environmental efforts. Sustainable production from forest resources and the conservation of biodiversity are assured by a forest working plan and a time-tested selective felling system. About 50 per cent of Myanmar's total land surface is still covered by natural forests. Even though the forest area is about 33 million hectares, the prescribed allowable annual cut is less than 3 million cubic metres for teak and other hardwoods. This volume of commercial extraction is significantly less than the volume harvested by other countries in the region.

The Government's current development activities in the forest sector include the special project for greening the nine driest districts of the country; extension of the area under reserved forests; the establishment of new plantations; overall reforestation of the dry zone to provide much-needed timber and fuel wood for rural communities; and measures to improve the watersheds.

Myanmar attaches high importance to population issues and recognizes the close link between population and sustainable development. We participated in the Cairo Conference, and we heartily welcome the adoption by consensus of a non-binding 20-year Programme of Action. Our population-policy focus is on voluntary birth-spacing to promote the health of mother and child. The Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association — a non-governmental organization — is actively carrying out its assigned task in this field.

Much has been accomplished by the United Nations in the field of human rights. The Organization's most recent accomplishment in this area is the appointment by consensus, at the General Assembly's last session, of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The appointment of such an important personage by consensus testifies to the fact that both the developed and the developing countries attach importance to the promotion and protection of human rights, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. My delegation wishes the High Commissioner every success in carrying out his mandate.

As a responsible Member of the United Nations and as an unwavering advocate of the values that the Organization represents, the Union of Myanmar has always upheld and adhered to the basic norms of human rights, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As is confirmed by the Bangkok Declaration, the principles of national sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs should be respected by all nations, and attempts to use human rights to encroach on the essentially domestic jurisdiction of States should be avoided.

In saying this we do not mean that human rights may be systematically violated behind the barrier of non-interference. We wish to see human rights promoted through cooperation and consensus-building, and not through the imposition of values that we do not share.

We believe that, even as we seek universality of human rights, we must never minimize or forget diversity in historical, cultural and religious backgrounds. We are also against double standards and the temptation to use human rights as a means of achieving political ends.

The right to sufficient food, clothing and shelter, the right to a decent quality of life and the right to live peacefully and in security are often neglected in the clamour for individual rights. At this delicate juncture in our history, when Myanmar is in the midst of transforming itself to a multi-party democracy with a market economy, the interests of its 45 million people as a whole must take precedence over the interests of any individual. Confrontation and incitement to unrest and instability have no place when the nation is in the process of reconciliation and reconsolidation.

In keeping with the aspirations of all the national races, Myanmar is also at present at the critical stage of drafting a firm constitution. My Government would certainly not like to see the present momentum of the constitutional process and the efforts for national reconciliation impeded in any way, nor can it allow a return to the chaos and anarchy of the incidents of 1988.

The Myanmar Government does not condone human rights abuses. In fact, it is totally against them. We have cooperated fully with the United Nations in every field and, in this regard, with the Commission on Human Rights by providing information in connection with communications and queries concerning the situation in Myanmar. Not only have we provided information sought by the Commission, but we have also received the Independent Experts and the Special Rapporteur appointed by the Commission on Human Rights. The Special Rapporteur, Mr. Yozo Yokota, was received in

1992 and in 1993. In deference to the United Nations and as a gesture of our goodwill and cooperation, we will receive him again this year.

The Memorandum of Understanding between Myanmar and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) signed on 5 November 1993, setting out UNHCR's role in Myanmar's border development projects, is an illustration of our steady cooperation with the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies. It is normal that some issues should arise from time to time between neighbouring States. In such cases, we always seek peaceful solutions based on mutual goodwill, respect and understanding. A case in point is the matter of transport and movement of people between Myanmar and Bangladesh across our common border. Although some quarters tried to exaggerate the situation by invoking potential regional destabilization, our two countries were able to resolve the situation in a spirit of mutual friendship and understanding resulting in the repatriation so far of nearly 70,000 returnees to their hearths and homes.

At the initiative of the Secretary-General, Myanmar decided to establish a dialogue with the United Nations to exchange views on various issues of common concern. I should like briefly to apprise the Assembly of the developments leading to this decision.

During his visit to Myanmar in March this year, Under-Secretary-General Mr. Rafeeudin Ahmed, Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), delivered a letter and a verbal message from the Secretary-General to Secretary I of the State Law and Order Restoration Council. The Secretary-General, in his letter, made constructive remarks in regard to the measures taken by the Myanmar Government and showed keen interest in the developments in Myanmar, particularly the process of national reconciliation and steps taken in drafting a firm constitution through the National Convention. The Secretary-General also expressed his desire to establish a dialogue with the Government of the Union of Myanmar to exchange views on the various issues with a view to considering how the United Nations could assist in facilitating continued progress towards the resolution of these issues. Secretary I, in his acknowledgment, informed the Secretary-General that a communication would be made on this subject in the near future.

While attending the Ministerial Meeting of the Association of South-East Asian Nations in Bangkok, I transmitted, through the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand, on 21 July 1994, our initial response to the Secretary-General. Further to this response, the Myanmar Government informed the Executive Secretary of ESCAP that the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar had been designated to initiate the dialogue proposed by the Secretary-General at a mutually agreeable date and, in this regard, sought his advice on the modalities of carrying out such a dialogue more fruitfully. I am happy to apprise the Assembly through you, Sir, that I had two meetings earlier this month with Mr. Marrack Goulding, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the United Nations, and that the dialogue between the Myanmar Government and the United Nations is now well under way.

The global spread of drug abuse has become a major international concern in recent years. The evil consequences of illicit drugs transcend borders and the threat of illicit drugs can be overcome only with effective international cooperation. We share the view that concerted action is needed at the national, subregional, regional and global levels.

Myanmar has always treated anti-narcotics measures as a national responsibility. At the national level, the Government has adopted comprehensive plans for the effective implementation of drug-suppression measures. A new law against narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances was enacted in 1993, encompassing effective measures against the widening scope of the drug menace. In our national strategies against drugs, a new approach was launched in 1988, the key concept of which was to alleviate the poverty of the peoples of the border areas by providing them with a means of alternative income, while at the same time working to raise their awareness of the magnitude of human misery resulting from drugs. This approach is being carried out as one of the main objectives of our master plan for the development of the border areas and national races. It is evident that the most effective approach to the eradication of poppy cultivation would be to implement a comprehensive programme for the social and economic development of the national races in the border areas. We have now established a mechanism for coordinating action against illicit drugs in all their aspects.

We have also been coordinating our national efforts with those of our neighbours to ensure a maximum impact in drug eradication in the region. The Myanmar Government has signed agreements with the People's Republic of China and the United Nations International

Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), as well as with Thailand and the UNDCP. Bilateral narcotics-suppression agreements have been signed with Laos and India, and we aim to work out a similar agreement with Bangladesh. In October 1993, in New York, Myanmar, the People's Republic of China, Laos, Thailand and the UNDCP signed a Memorandum of Understanding which would further harmonize collective activities aimed at reducing drug trafficking and production, eliminating poppy cultivation and reducing drug demand and consumption. There have been two ministerial conferences at the subregional level in which Myanmar has actively participated. Myanmar is a State party to the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and to the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. Moreover, on 7 June this year Myanmar deposited the instrument of accession to the United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances. We are also carrying out a series of measures in implementation of the recommendations contained in the Global Programme of Action adopted at the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly in February 1990.

Members of the Myanmar security forces are engaged in a relentless war against drug trafficking. They may not be wearing blue helmets like the men and women from different lands serving as guardians of peace under the United Nations banner, but the cause for which hundreds of them have sacrificed life and limb is no less internationalist and no less worthy. There are those who express doubt about our commitment to the eradication of narcotics, and I would ask them: "Which country in the world has sacrificed the lives of over 190 soldiers, with an additional 350 wounded, in the combat against drug traffickers in a matter of only four weeks?" With this serious dedication and commitment in the fight against illicit drugs, we in Myanmar are ready and willing to cooperate fully with all our neighbours and the international community for sustained efforts against this scourge.

Myanmar is a union of over 100 different national races residing there. Unity among the different national races is essential for the preservation of our independence and sovereignty as well as for the economic and social progress of our country. Since regaining independence in 1948, Myanmar unfortunately has had to face internal strife started by various armed groups. Because of this, the country has suffered immensely and lagged behind in economic development in comparison with other nations of the region. In these dire circumstances, it is only natural that the State Law and Order Restoration Council should attach the utmost importance to the preservation of independence and the strengthening of unity and national solidarity among all the national races of Myanmar. Since it assumed the responsibilities of the State, the State Law and Order Restoration Council has given priority to the achievement of national reconciliation.

Beginning in 1989, less than one year after it assumed responsibility, the Government made overtures to the armed groups to return to the legal fold. Since April 1992, the armed forces have suspended military offensives against the armed groups in the interest of national reconciliation. Over four decades of internal strife has not benefited anyone, but has only caused death and destruction and untold suffering for the people.

No one appreciates peace more than a soldier. It is therefore most gratifying that a total of 12 groups having trust in the sincerity of the Government's offer have returned to the legal fold and are working together with the Government for the development of their regions. These groups are also being provided with the opportunity to participate in the national political process — the National Convention — to shape the country's future. With the Shan State Nationalities Peoples' Liberation Organization, which returned to the legal fold on 9 October 1994, the armed groups in the reconciliation process now number 13. They will be integrated in the same manner as previous groups that are participating in the National Convention.

To the remaining groups that have yet to return to the legal fold, the Myanmar Government reiterates its call not to miss this golden opportunity but to join hands in building a peaceful, democratic and modern union. Guns have fallen silent in the country as never before in the history of modern Myanmar, and these groups should look at the greater interest of the country and work for the benefit of all the national races, in accordance with the proclamations they themselves have been making for so long.

At this juncture, let me turn to another aspect of the Government's objectives: the drafting of a firm and enduring constitution. Towards this end, a National Convention has been meeting since the beginning of last year to draft a new constitution. Consensus has already been reached on the 15 chapter headings for the 104 fundamental principles of the State and for the chapters on State, State structure and Head of State.

At the resumed session of the National Convention, which commenced on 2 September 1994, the Chairman of the National Convention Convening Work Committee elucidated the points relative to the matter of self-administered divisions or self-administered zones in the Union, and to constituting the legislative, executive and judicial branches for detailed discussions and deliberations among the delegates. As for those who allege that the process is moving too slowly, let me ask: Is the world today not full of examples where too much haste has led to chaos and confusion, even to armed conflict and the disintegration of nations?

At the same time, let me assure the Assembly that the State Law and Order Restoration Council has no intention of unnecessarily prolonging the process or causing delays. However, a balance must be struck between the need to reach consensus among the nearly 700 delegates on very urgent and vital issues, such as the national races, and the desire for the process to be completed in timely fashion. Anyone following these deliberations closely will realize that they lucidly give the lie to the allegations that the deliberations in the National Convention were orchestrated by the Government.

At the same time, I wish to indicate to certain observers that in our society reaching consensus is more important than debating who is right or wrong or who won the debate. We would like the constitution to reflect as much as possible the wishes of the national races, while at the same time we would be most happy if consensus on the remaining chapters could be reached as soon as possible. What the Government has done, and is doing at the moment, is to ensure peace, stability, law and order while striving for the economic development of the entire nation so that the transition to democracy will be smooth and tranquil.

Today the National Convention is in full session for further discussions on the fundamental principles to be enshrined in the new constitution. The very fact that the new State structure will be a union system is a manifestation of the consensus that has been reached by the Convention. The new Union of Myanmar that is envisaged by the National Convention will be a genuine multi-party, democratic State in order to bring the nation modernity, unity, stability, peace and harmony. The new constitution will have safeguards to guarantee non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

As in the case of other modern Constitutions, the three organs of government - the legislative, executive and judicial — will be properly constituted and separated as much as possible and will be able to exert reciprocal control with checks and balances among themselves. Among the fundamental principles already laid down, independent administration of justice in accordance with the law, administration of justice in public except where restricted by law, the right to defence and the right of appeal will be guaranteed. Furthermore, there will be constitutional remedies, and the Supreme Court will have the power to issue writs.

Citizens will be able to enjoy the rule of law, which is the fundamental legal safeguard necessary for a democratic State. Because of the separation of powers envisaged in the new constitution, the judiciary will be the ultimate guardian of fundamental rights. Freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of belief, freedom of worship, freedom to seek a livelihood and freedom of organization will be guaranteed. There will be equality of status, equality of opportunity and equality before the law.

The entire Myanmar nation is currently engaged in our national endeavour to establish a truly democratic and modern society in accordance with the aspirations of our people. We the people of the Union of Myanmar are doing our utmost to advance the ongoing political and constitutional process and the current programme of national economic development in the interest of all our national brethren.

We have a popular saying in Myanmar:

> "As we sow in our deeds, so shall we surely reap in our future destiny."

We are therefore fully confident that, with continued dedication, determination and diligence in our national endeavour, we will surely be able to successfully establish a democratic society based on the universal values of justice, liberty and equality.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zambia, His Excellency the Honourable Mr. Remmy Mushota.

Mr. Mushota (Zambia): Let me join the representatives who have spoken before me in congratulating you, Sir, on your unanimous election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth

session. You represent a country, Côte d'Ivoire, which has played and continues to play an active role in the framework of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and in the United Nations. You bring to the presidency vast experience in the area of international relations as well as diplomatic skill and acumen, which puts you in good stead to steer the deliberations of the General Assembly to a successful conclusion. You can count on my delegation's unqualified support and cooperation.

I also wish to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Samuel Insanally of Guyana, who presided over the work of the forty-eighth session with great distinction and rare personal attributes.

Mr. Blandino Canto (Dominican Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Our distinguished Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has continued to provide outstanding leadership in the discharge of his duties. Zambia is particularly grateful to the Secretary-General for his untiring efforts in pursuit of world peace and security, development and international cooperation.

The past year has been one of mixed blessings on the international scene, a year of notable achievements and failures. In the view of Zambia, the most positive development of the year was the achievement of majority rule in the Republic of South Africa. My delegation is really delighted to see in our midst the delegation of a democratic and non-racial South Africa, led by President Nelson Mandela. President Mandela was the symbol of the liberation struggle in South Africa and it is therefore befitting that he, an icon of the liberation struggle, should become the first President of a new South Africa.

The return of South Africa to the family of the United Nations is without a doubt due to the tenacity, uncompromising commitment and dedication of our brothers and sisters in South Africa who bore the brunt of the evil system of apartheid. At the same time, it cannot be denied that South Africa's victory over apartheid and its rejoining the United Nations is a concrete manifestation of the seminal role played by this Organization.

In order to consolidate the democracy achieved in South Africa and address the negative social and economic legacy of apartheid, substantial international assistance is imperative. In this regard, Zambia endorses the appeal made by President Nelson Mandela for international support to South Africa to enable the effective implementation of its reconstruction and development programme.

A democratic, peaceful and prosperous South Africa will no doubt have a positive impact on southern Africa and the African continent as a whole. Indeed, South Africa's contribution as a member of the Southern African Development Community has already begun to be felt and appreciated. It has, together with Botswana and Zimbabwe, also played a highly commendable role in the peaceful resolution of the constitutional problem in Lesotho. We have every confidence, therefore, that South Africa will contribute positively to the work of the United Nations.

Africa has had a few other bright spots. We are delighted with the peaceful resolution of the territorial dispute between Chad and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. The positive developments in Burundi towards a peaceful resolution of the long-standing conflict are commendable. However, the situation remains volatile. There is therefore a need to sustain international engagement.

With regard to Angola, it is indeed gratifying that the talks between the Government of Angola and National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), which have been taking place in Lusaka, Zambia, for the past eleven months under the chairmanship of the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Alioune Blondin Beye, have made tremendous progress. We therefore look forward to a successful conclusion of the talks by the end of October, culminating in the signing of a peace agreement, by the middle of November 1994, on the basis of the Bicesse Accords, and the pertinent resolutions of the Security Council.

In this regard, we take this opportunity to commend both the Angolan Government and the UNITA delegation for their seriousness and commitment to the task of finding a peaceful solution to their country's fratricidal war. We also thank the observers to these talks, namely the United States, the Russian Federation and Portugal. Sustained international assistance to Angola will be necessary in the post-agreement era and Zambia will continue to assist the people of Angola during this period.

In Mozambique, we look forward to the holding of the first multiparty elections, scheduled to take place on 27 and 28 October. We commend the Mozambican Government and RENAMO for committing themselves to

the United Nations peace initiative and to the Rome Agreement. We applaud the role that the United Nations has played through its peace-keeping efforts and in helping to prepare the people of Mozambique for the forthcoming elections. As a gesture of solidarity with the people of Mozambique, Zambia has made a modest contribution to the United Nations peace-keeping operation.

In Malawi, we welcome the recent peaceful and democratic transition to a multiparty system of government. We endorse the appeal made by President Bakili Muluzi for international assistance to consolidate democracy and to assist in the reconstruction of the country. My Government also commends the technical and advisory services provided by the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat of the United Nations.

Zambia welcomes the positive trend towards democratization on the African continent. Why should Africa democratize? Africa should democratize because it is our firm belief that democratic systems of government promote good governance, transparency and accountability in the administration of public affairs, independence of the judiciary, and respect for human rights and the rule of law. These qualities lay a firm basis for peace and stability and are thus conducive to sustainable development. We would therefore urge all of our development partners to take account of all these positive developments in the formulation of their development policies towards Africa. They should also endeavour to explain to their taxpayers the significance of these democratic changes and their correlation to sustainable development. The electorates of the North must be made to appreciate that it is in their enlightened self-interest to support developing countries. There is now much hope in Africa. Indeed, Africa, in the long run, holds the promise of a positive and prosperous future.

In the Middle East, we welcome the positive developments in Palestine following the agreements and declarations between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, as well as between Jordan and Israel. It is our sincere hope that progress can also be achieved in the negotiations with the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon. International assistance is urgently required for the reconstruction, rehabilitation and other essential needs of the Palestinians.

We commend the efforts deployed by the leadership of the PLO and of Israel, their tenacity and their determination to work for peace. We also commend the crucial catalytic roles played by the United States of America and the Russian Federation as co-sponsors of the talks. The Kingdom of Norway also deserves our gratitude for its contribution to the peace talks. The sustained support and commitment of the Arab League to the peace process also merit special mention.

On the other hand, negative developments abound in Africa and elsewhere on the international scene. These conflict situations continue to defy durable solutions through dialogue, reconciliation and negotiation, in stark contrast with the exemplary cases I have just cited.

Thus, in our region, the civil wars in Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia and the Sudan torment us all because of our aversion to fratricidal and ethnic violence and the serious humanitarian crises they have engendered. In this connection, Zambia also strongly condemns ethnic violence wherever it occurs, including in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We deplore the further deterioration of the situation in Liberia. We regret the lack of progress towards disarmament, demobilization and general elections. We appeal to all the parties to commit themselves to the Cotonou and Akosombo Peace Agreements. We also wish to stress the need to maintain the Military Observer Group of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOMOG) in Liberia and to provide it with the requisite logistical support.

As for Rwanda, we and the entire world community have been deeply shocked by the genocide and the most dehumanizing spectre of violence in that country, resulting in one of the worst humanitarian and refugee crises in the history of mankind. Zambia has expressed its strong condemnation of the genocide and mindless violence in Rwanda. We strongly feel that those responsible for the massacres must be brought to trial through an international tribunal. Conditions of peace, security, stability and confidence should be created in Rwanda in order to facilitate the repatriation of refugees from overburdened neighbouring countries. We hope that the new Government will commit itself to carrying out its declared intention to work for reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction in Rwanda. Substantial assistance for humanitarian, rehabilitation and reconstruction purposes is thus crucial. The neighbouring asylum countries also need assistance.

The role and efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) in creating conditions of stability and security in the country are

crucial. We therefore deeply regret the delay in the deployment of UNAMIR troops to the level of 5,500 in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. In this regard, African countries have been ready and willing to send sufficient troops. However, the major constraint has been inadequate logistical support.

As a token measure, Zambia has contributed a peace-keeping contingent of civilian and military personnel to the UNAMIR operation, thanks to the generous logistical support, in materiel, from the Netherlands. Furthermore, the Zambian Peace Corps, a non-governmental organization, has organized activities to raise funds to purchase medicines, food and other humanitarian requirements for the displaced people in Rwanda.

We remain concerned by the continuing crisis in Somalia and by the lack of progress. We note, however, the genuine efforts being deployed to resolve the crisis. Notwithstanding the difficulties, we strongly believe that the continued presence of the United Nations in Somalia is critical.

In Sudan, the continuing civil war and factional fighting in the south and the deteriorating human rights situation nationwide are a cause of serious concern to us in Zambia. We urge the parties to reach a negotiated settlement.

As to Haiti, Zambia reaffirms its support for the efforts of the Organization of American States and the United Nations to restore democracy and respect for human rights there, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

With regard to Cuba, we reaffirm our belief that the time has come for the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba to be lifted. We hope that our two friends the United States and Cuba will resolve their differences peacefully. In this regard, we are encouraged by the recent dialogue between the two countries.

Zambia attaches great importance to the role of regional organizations in addressing conflict situations. In this respect we note with satisfaction the increasingly active role played by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), including at regional and subregional levels, to address the root causes of conflicts and to prevent, manage and resolve them.

In particular, in June of last year the OAU established a mechanism for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in order for Africa to deal effectively with conflict situations on its own. For too long and too often, Africa has relied on external assistance to resolve its conflicts. The time has come for Africa to handle these situations resolutely. Conflicts continue to sap Africa's energies, to waste its scarce resources and to retard its development. They must be eliminated in order to create an environment conducive to economic and social development.

Zambia therefore appeals to the international community to contribute generously to the OAU Fund established to sustain the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. International support is critical to the effective implementation of this important initiative. It is warranted by the fact that the United Nations, through the Security Council, exercises primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

It is now evident that peace and development not only are interrelated but are indivisible. This has been brought into prominence by the comprehensive reports of the Secretary-General entitled "Agenda for Peace" and "Agenda for Development". Indeed, in a number of conflict situations poverty and deprivation have been the underlying causes. There is, therefore, a compelling case to bring development and related issues to the centre stage of the United Nations, in order to promote the cause of peace in its most comprehensive perspective.

We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's preliminary report on the "Agenda for Development". My delegation fully supports the views of the Group of 77 on this subject, as reflected in its Ministerial Declaration of 30 September 1994. In particular, an Agenda for Development must be action-oriented and focus on the economic growth and development of the developing countries, especially the least developed amongst them. The Agenda for Development must strengthen the role of the United Nations in the area of international economic policy-making and coordination.

Africa is in economic crisis. It continues to face grave economic difficulties. Africa therefore needs a favourable international economic environment for the promotion of investment flows, increased official development assistance, technological transfer, improved trade opportunities and better terms of trade. Africa further needs a viable and comprehensive solution for its

huge debt burden. Such a debt strategy should include debt cancellation. In this regard, we fully support the positions of the Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement.

Zambia welcomes the conclusion of the Uruguay Round and the Agreement to establish the World Trade Organization (WTO) with effect from January of next year. It is our expectation that the World Trade Organization will promote a non-discriminatory and predictable trading system and protect the rights and interests of the developing countries.

In view of the increasing economic disparity between the developed and the developing countries, the WTO will not start on a level playing field. In this connection, it is the strong view of my delegation that the implementation of the Uruguay Round must be monitored constantly to ensure that the interests of developing countries are adequately protected. Compensation should be provided to those developing countries that are facing difficulties, particularly the least developed.

Let me now address Zambia's economic and political situation. On the economic front, we have followed, resolutely, a credible macro-economic reform programme whose main objective is to promote growth with stability based on an equitable allocation of resources. The main policy thrusts of the programme include strict control of the money supply and credit, with the aim of keeping inflation to minimal levels; liberalization of the economy with greater reliance on market forces; and implementation of the privatization programme, through which previously State-owned enterprises are to be turned into private concerns in order to reduce direct Government participation in the economy.

Although these measures are expected to yield positive results in the long run, they have had some short-term negative effects, such as a drastic reduction in employment levels in the formal sector, a decline in income level, and a marked increase in both the level and the intensity of poverty, especially in the rural areas and among the vulnerable segments of the population. To cushion the poor from these adverse effects of economic adjustment, a social safety net has been created to assist those who lose their jobs or who are unable to meet their basic needs or obtain social services. It is going to be a long haul, but the Zambian Government is determined to rise above these challenges.

I should be remiss if I did not express gratitude to all our development partners for the economic, financial and technical support rendered to our country. The support provided Zambia by our development partners will serve to underpin our structural adjustment programme, to which our Government remains committed. More importantly, such assistance will help to consolidate our democratization process, which we initiated in 1991 with the reintroduction of plural politics. In this regard, my delegation is pleased to assure the international community that Zambia's democratization process remains firmly on course.

There is a strong connection between the plan of action adopted at the Cairo Conference on Population, the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Copenhagen early next year, and the World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing, next September. The World Summit on Social Development will be an opportunity for the international community to renew its commitment and political will to effectively address a number of social and economic problems.

The contribution made by women to development efforts is very clear, although it is often underestimated. We therefore look forward to Beijing's programme of action, which we trust will ensure the full and equal participation of women at all levels of human activity.

With regard to the environment, the international community is faced with the major challenge of giving practical effect to the concept of sustainable development as reflected in Agenda 21. To do this, effective international cooperation is vital. In particular, practical steps must be taken to provide access to appropriate technologies and to mobilize new and additional financial resources for the countries in need: the developing countries. My delegation therefore calls on the developed countries to fulfil the solemn commitments undertaken at the Rio Earth Summit. At the same time, the task at hand is global and must thus be shared globally. It involves individuals, community groups, non-governmental organizations, Governments and financial institutions. In the language of the Earth Summit, "common but differentiated responsibilities" (A/CONF.151/26 (Vol. I) Principle 7) is now imperative.

Zambia attaches high priority to environmental issues. As a reflection of our commitment, we have formulated a National Environmental Action Plan aimed at integrating environmental concerns into our socio-economic development plans. We have taken deliberate measures to increase the level of public awareness of environmental issues, particularly through

the active involvement of non-governmental organizations and community groups.

My Government is firmly committed to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We believe that it is the duty and responsibility of all Governments to do so, regardless of their political, economic or cultural systems.

In the aftermath of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, we should work to implement its important recommendations. Accordingly, my delegation will support genuine efforts in this direction during the current session. My delegation welcomes the establishment of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the appointment of Mr. José Ayala Lasso to this high office. Mr. Lasso has already proven his suitability for the appointment, and we commend his important initiatives concerning human rights situations in Africa and elsewhere. My delegation also supports the strengthening of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights in Geneva.

My Government has also established a Human Rights Commission, which is responsible for investigating alleged human rights violations in Zambia, including those committed prior to the reintroduction of plural politics in 1991. In the spirit of our policy of transparency, the Government will publish the Commission's findings in a report to be made available to the general public. Zambia is thus firmly committed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to other relevant international covenants and instruments.

In the area of disarmament and arms control, my delegation strongly supports efforts to accelerate the elimination of nuclear weapons and to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We also fully support the review and extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which is scheduled to take place next year. However, we share the view that any extension of the NPT should be linked to progress on nuclear disarmament and to the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

Zambia welcomes the significant progress achieved in the Geneva negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We further support the case for a convention on conventional weapons and welcome the introduction of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms with a view to promoting transparency and confidence-building.

Zambia welcomes the successful conclusion during the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, of the agreement relating to the implementation of part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which opened the way for the universal acceptance of the Convention and its provisions.

Let me now turn to the United Nations itself. As we meet in this session on the threshold of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, we have to recognize that the fundamental meaning of the United Nations Charter has remained unchanged; that the United Nations has undergone periods of both triumph and disillusionment; that the United Nations is still an international organization for the people as well as of the people and it is therefore supposed to be a democratic institution. It is now time to reflect on a United Nations that will serve mankind for another 50 years after 1995. It will have to be a new United Nations, one which will suit the exigencies of the twenty-first century. It will be necessary to sharpen the mechanisms that were established to give effect to the declared principles and purposes of the Charter. It is only by going through this metamorphosis that our Organization will be able to adapt to a changed and changing environment, to new demands, new opportunities and new challenges.

In this connection, my delegation is of the considered view that expansion of the membership of the Security Council is extremely important. Regions of the world, such as Africa, that are not represented at the level of permanent membership should be so represented. It will, therefore, be incumbent upon those regions to agree on which country or countries should represent them as permanent members.

Apart from dealing with the Security Council, we must fashion the United Nations in such a way as to accord a central role to issues of the development of the developing countries. The Economic and Social Council should therefore be attuned to meeting this challenge. We would like to see a stronger Economic and Social Council with a mandate adequate to coordinate the policies of all development programmes and activities, as well as the activities of the specialized agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions, for the promotion of sustained economic growth and development.

We now live in a world in which there has been a major recasting of international relations ranging from political to economic, environmental to humanitarian issues. In this new atmosphere, the United Nations is the linchpin of our collective security, the repository of our

hope for progress and prosperity. In this atmosphere, the United Nations has no greater contribution to make in the service of its ideals than to help the world find its way from the era of fear from which we are emerging into a time of hope and progress for all mankind.

We wish this great creation more success for the betterment of the entire world.

The President *(interpretation from Spanish):* I call next on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, His Excellency The Honourable Ralph Maraj.

Mr. Maraj (Trinidad and Tobago): I should like to offer congratulations and special greetings to Ambassador Essy on his unanimous election to the presidency of the General Assembly. I am confident that under his able leadership this session of the General Assembly is well placed to address successfully the important issues on its agenda.

Allow me to express appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Samuel Insanally for his wise and effective guidance during the session just concluded. He has indeed made an outstanding contribution, of which our region is very proud.

We express our thanks to the Secretary-General for his stewardship of the Organization during these trying times, and we renew our pledge to give him our fullest support.

Trinidad and Tobago, like the rest of the world, is in the process of making fundamental changes in the way we manage our affairs. We have already advanced significantly along the path of deregulation and liberalization brought upon us by the inexorable move towards globalization and borderlessness, and most importantly by the absolute necessity to achieve greater efficiency and higher sustainable levels of productivity. Greater emphasis is being placed on the market paradigm as the means to unleash the inner energies of our society and to create the wealth needed for the improvement of the lives of all our citizens.

But let me hasten to add that we are acutely aware of the imbalances that could arise as a result of the purest play of market forces, and we as a society consider it our responsibility to ensure that distributive justice exists in our system, sufficiently to guarantee the well-being of all of our citizens, including those who are unable to compete and who for one reason or another may have been pushed out of the mainstream of national activity. In other words, whilst many things may be changing, there is one constant in Trinidad and Tobago, and that is our preservation of a humane and just society where all have the opportunity for fulfilment.

Side by side with the globalization process, or maybe as a byproduct of it, is a resurgence of regionalism throughout the world. In our own hemisphere this is very pronounced, and the dream of a free trade area from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego seems more realizable than ever before. We are pleased to see various subregional groupings emerge and then develop relationships with one another. Never before in the history of our hemisphere has the integration process been so advanced. We have the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Andean Pact, the Central American Integration Movement, the Latin American Economic System (SELA), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Rio Group, in addition of course to the Organization of American States. It is significant that the cooperation which is flowering is not only economic but also political; this augurs very well for the development as well as for the security of the hemisphere.

In addition to this multilateral coalescence, there is a general strengthening of bilateral relationships. We in CARICOM have been making strides towards overcoming historical barriers and have been deepening our ties with Latin America. My own country, having this year established diplomatic relations with six countries of Latin America, now has diplomatic relations with all the countries of the western hemisphere. Also, we joined 38 others, including both independent countries and non-independent Territories, in establishing the Association of Caribbean States, comprising countries of the Caribbean littoral and bringing into being a market of over 200 million people with a combined gross domestic product of $500 billion.

We do all this for the benefit of our people, realizing that when we join forces we are stronger, we lay the bedrock for a stable environment within the hemisphere, and we create, among other things, megamarkets for our products and generate the wealth through which we improve the standard of living in our countries.

I have spoken about the possibilities for political co-operation as a result of the integration processes

taking place in our region. May I mention an outstanding current example. I refer of course to Haiti. At present in Haiti, sanctioned by Security Council resolution 940 (1994), is a multinational force comprised mainly of troops from the region, with military contributions from elsewhere. My Government welcomes the cooperation extended by countries outside the region whose farsightedness persuaded them to contribute to the restoration process now taking place in Haiti.

In the changed circumstances of today's world, there is more than ever a need to cooperate for security purposes and for the preservation of democracy, and this of course requires the political will which has been demonstrated by our region in the Haitian situation. Soldiers from Trinidad and Tobago are part of the multinational force at present in Haiti. We are pleased to participate in the collective efforts to ensure stability and the return of democracy and the democratically elected President to that country. We believe that the Caribbean has a special responsibility in relation to Haiti. We have therefore been in the forefront of attempts to solve the crisis, and we vow to remain with the problem until it is no more with us.

Trinidad and Tobago joins the jubilation of the millions of proud Haitians at home and in the diaspora at the welcome news of the resignation of General Raoul Cedras and his Chief of Staff. Like others, we hope this sends an unequivocal message to those elements in Haiti that seek to continue to wage war and terror against a people still yearning for a society of freedom, democracy and justice - a society in which the collective talents and resourcefulness of Haitians can be appropriately channelled towards rebuilding their nation and fighting the enemies of poverty and degradation.

Another area of Caribbean concern has to do with Cuba. We welcome the commencement of dialogue between Cuba and the United States of America on specific issues. These talks should assist in laying a foundation for the resolution of remaining difficulties and in achieving the long-term objective of fully reintegrating Cuba into the Western Hemisphere. We in the Caribbean are doing our part towards the goal of Cuba's reintegration. We have established the Cuba-Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Mixed Commission, and recently Cuba joined us as a founding member of the Association of Caribbean States.

Trinidad and Tobago also welcomes the consolidation of democracy in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Peaceful elections continue to be conducted in these countries, deepening the democratic process in the region.

We are pleased with the many positive developments in our part of the world. There have also been positive developments in former areas of conflict which seized the attention of this body for many years, further illustrating what can be achieved through partnership and political will. The peaceful transition to democracy in South Africa a few months ago stands out as a beacon of hope and signals that no problem is insurmountable if there is concerted national and international action. Trinidad and Tobago joins with the international community in assuring South Africa of its continued support in this crucial post-apartheid period. The Government of South Africa has announced its decision to include among its priorities the continuation of traditional friendships and the promotion of new partnerships. We look forward to the development of strong bilateral relations between South Africa and ourselves, a process that is already under way.

Trinidad and Tobago is also heartened by the progress achieved so far in the Middle East peace process. We welcome the initiation of self-governing arrangements in the Gaza Strip and Jericho - important developments in this transition period - and look forward to the extension of Palestinian self-governing arrangements to encompass other occupied territories in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles. The international community's support for development efforts in the economic and social fields and the rebuilding of infrastructure destroyed during the long years of occupation is critical to the Palestinian people at this time.

We are encouraged by the Washington Declaration of 25 July 1994, issued by the Governments of Jordan and Israel, which ended the state of war and paves the way for normalization of relations and a formal peace treaty. We also appreciate the efforts made by the Syrian and Lebanese Governments in their commitment to advancing the peace process in the Middle East.

Whilst there is cause for satisfaction globally, we continue to be traumatized by other events which have already shattered the lives of millions of people, evoking images more horrendous than those we have witnessed before. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a genocidal war rages on, having already brought the evil of "ethnic cleansing" into our modern vocabulary and consciousness. We were first appalled and are now numbed by the horror in Rwanda, where hundreds of thousands of lives have been lost, creating hellish human suffering in that country. Destruction, oppression and

suffering continue in various parts of the world, affecting hundreds of thousands of lives in Somalia and elsewhere.

Nuclear proliferation makes us all very uneasy, creating pictures of an abyss of unspeakable chaos into which we can very easily slip. The ideological divide may be behind us, but the threat of Armageddon still hangs over humanity.

It has become a cliché of international helplessness to say that the world community must act decisively and expeditiously to do this or that to deal with many of the problems that I have mentioned. The fact is that there is a very long road ahead. To effect lasting solutions to the crises that are upon us we must go back always to the fundamentals and remember, for example, that development and peace are inextricably linked. If we are to get anywhere near to solving some of our problems we must deal with key issues such as good governance, the promotion of peace, the promotion of justice as a pillar of society, sustainable environmental management and social development.

There is no doubt in my mind that the world community is already beginning to grapple with fundamentals. We are in the process of elaborating the Agenda for Development as a necessary complement to the "Agenda for Peace". International conferences of world leaders, some held and others to come, all point the way to a new partnership for development based on global consensus and action.

In this regard, the World Summit for Social Development will be convened in March 1995 in Denmark to address some of the serious ills afflicting many societies by focusing on the key problems of poverty, unemployment and social marginalization. The programme of action to be adopted at the social Summit must therefore include specific provisions, including adequate financial resources for implementation and follow-up by the international community and, more specifically, by the United Nations and its agencies and institutions.

There can be no doubt that the quality of life in many countries today as it relates to the individual is undergoing a grave transformation. The growing intolerance and increasing senseless violence within the home and in communities at large have led many to question the very mores of the society in which we live. The situation is further aggravated by the growth of organized transnational crime, which in many countries exacerbates problems of rampant vicious criminal activity, terrorism, drug abuse, illegal drug trafficking and money laundering.

In this era of increasing globalization, no Government, particularly Governments in the developing world, can hope, on its own, to address effectively these varied problems. We therefore welcome the approval by the International Law Commission earlier this year of a draft statute for an international criminal court and we support the convening of a diplomatic conference to conclude a convention on the establishment of a permanent court.

Another important area being tackled by the international community is the full participation of women in the process of development. The fact is, effective international cooperation for development will remain elusive, in the absence of specific measures for an adequate means of empowering all members of society to participate fully in the political, economic and social life of their respective societies. It is widely acknowledged that investment in women can have an enormous impact on the advancement of society as a whole. However, women from all parts of the globe continue to face systematic discrimination in all fields of endeavour, while also bearing a disproportionate burden of the consequences of economic recession, poverty, structural adjustment policies and political strife.

In acknowledging this, Trinidad and Tobago has put in place constitutional guarantees to ensure equal treatment for all under the law, irrespective of gender, creed or race. My Government holds steadfastly to the position that women must be allowed equal opportunity to participate fully in all spheres of life and at all levels of society, particularly in decision-making positions.

Trinidad and Tobago is encouraged by efforts made during the ongoing preparatory process for the Fourth World Conference on Women to address these and other crucial issues. Much work remains to be done in the ensuing months. My Government will continue to work closely with others in an effort to elaborate concrete recommendations, including specific attainable goals, aimed at overcoming the numerous impediments to the advancement of women.

The population question also continues to be on the international agenda. It is recognized that population-related goals and policies must be integral parts of cultural, economic and social development aimed at improving the quality of life. Consequently, the

International Conference on Population and Development, which was convened in Cairo last September, quite appropriately reviewed the impact of demographic factors on development and emphasized the importance of the entire spectrum of population policies to the development process. We must now take concrete steps to uphold the principles and implement the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference.

The crucial area of the environment is also being discussed. Member States have taken initial steps at the national and international levels, towards the elaboration of a new development paradigm based on the integration of environmental concerns in development activities. The continuation of this process would lead to the implementation of the policies and decisions adopted at Rio de Janeiro, thereby making possible the attainment of the targets identified for our common good.

As a follow-up to the Rio de Janeiro Conference, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, which was held in Barbados earlier this year, allowed island States and the rest of the international community to explore a comprehensive approach to sustainable development within the framework of Agenda 21. For many island developing States which have remained on the periphery of international programmes for development, the implementation of the agreements adopted in Barbados will create the opportunity to participate as contributors and beneficiaries in a truly global effort. As Chairman of the Alliance of Small Island States, Trinidad and Tobago reiterates its commitment to playing a lead role in the active pursuit of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action.

The preservation and sustainable management of the resources in all global commons must be an important goal of the Agenda for Development. But this goal must be facilitated by the development of legal regimes to ensure that we successfully carry out our duties as trustees of those resources.

In this context, Trinidad and Tobago welcomes the imminent entry into force of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, having participated very actively with other Member States in forging a new, more universally accepted public order for the oceans. The spirit of accommodation and consensus manifested in the work achieved by the Preparatory Commission for the International Seabed Authority and for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea constitutes a solid and valuable foundation for the launching of the International Seabed Authority in Kingston, Jamaica, on 16 November 1994. Trinidad and Tobago will continue to participate constructively and in close cooperation with other Member States in the decision-making process of the Authority as well as in other institutions related to the 1982 Convention.

The coming into force of the Convention on the Law of the Sea should provide an impetus to the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, which is developing principles for the effective management of one of the most important renewable food resources. This objective can be attained only if there is a confluence of political will to act decisively.

Political will is also absolutely necessary if we are to address adequately the various international economic impediments to effective national efforts to promote social progress and better standards of life. The major obstacles include trade barriers, insufficient flows of international financing, onerous external debt and the inadequate transfer of technology to developing countries. They serve to frustrate the ardent efforts made by Governments to revitalize their economies.

Trinidad and Tobago welcomes the important step taken earlier this year towards free and open trade, with the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations. We emphasize, however, that as we seek to implement the trade liberalization measures under the agreements arrived at, urgent attention must be given to the persistent trend of economic growth accompanied by increased poverty, unemployment and marginalization of large sections of populations the world over.

It is clear from what I have said that it is only through a multilateral approach that we will solve the problems of the world. Clearly, the most appropriate vehicle to accommodate this approach is the United Nations. People are turning increasingly to the United Nations not only for the realization of their aspirations for peace and security, but also in their quest for development with equity and social justice. Following the dissipation of the distrust and hostility of the cold-war era, the United Nations ought to be in a better position to respond to these needs.

On becoming a Member of the United Nations 32 years ago, Trinidad and Tobago undertook along with other Member States to maintain international peace and

security and to promote the economic and social advancement of all peoples. To this end we intend to participate actively in current efforts to restructure the United Nations to enable it to become more responsive to the needs of Member States in this dynamic international environment.

As the United Nations is on the threshold of celebrating its fiftieth anniversary, Trinidad and Tobago is pleased to recommit itself to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter. As Members, we need to redouble our efforts towards forging universal peace and a new era of development, in which both nations and individuals find security and fulfilment. I am confident that inherent in the human condition is the desire and the will to achieve these goals.

Address by Mr. Mikhail Chygir, Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus

The President *(interpretation from Spanish):* The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus.

Mr. Mikhail Chygir, Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus, Mr. Mikhail Chygir, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Chygir (Belarus) *(interpretation from Russian):* Let me congratulate Mr. Amara Essy on his unanimous election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. This is both a tribute to his country's contribution to the work of the Organization and an acknowledgement of his personal achievements in multilateral diplomacy.

Almost half a century ago, the founding Member States — and my country is one of them — set for the United Nations a task of paramount importance: to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security and to promote the economic and social development of all nations. It was necessary to create a mechanism for coordinating states' efforts that could offer mutually acceptable solutions to international problems. Experience has shown that the United Nations can play the part of such a unique mechanism. Thanks to the great efforts of this prestigious international Organization, we have managed to avoid military flare-ups and conflicts in many parts of the world.

The world has changed dramatically. The political, ideological and military confrontation of two social systems has become a thing of the past. The ice of the cold war has melted away completely. These changes brought to the world hopes for a better future but, unfortunately, have failed to solve all international problems. Tragedies whose underlying cause is ethnic, religious and national enmity are being played out in Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nagorny Karabakh, Abkhazia and Tajikistan. Unsettled bilateral relations between some States, including those relating to the areas of human rights and protection of national minorities, are also factors. And there is also terrorism, drug-trafficking and uncontrolled arms exports, including arms supplies into areas of conflict and hot spots in countries where bloodshed continues.

Under these circumstances, the role of the United Nations as a universally recognized uniter of peoples becomes much more significant. I am deeply convinced that there will come a time when the collective reason of the United Nations will have a much greater impact on the processes taking place in the world. Our duty is to do everything we can to achieve that. Here in the United Nations, we have to find the answers to many questions of concern to our countries.

For Belarus, this is especially important. For four years now Belarus has been building a democratic, independent and sovereign State. Our ideal is one of a free citizen in a free country. After decades of totalitarianism and sham collectivism, we are gradually giving back to our people freedom, which the great humanist Leonardo da Vinci called the main gift of nature.

One significant milestone in the life of Belarus was the adoption of a new Constitution and — a historic first for us — truly free and democratic presidential elections. Henceforth Belarus has a President elected by the people, Alaksandr Lukashenka, who has testified to his basic commitment to progressive market reforms. Presidential power and the trust of the people guarantee that democratic reforms in our country will be irreversible. And today we also have regular elections to the Belarus Parliament and for local authorities.

In foreign policy, the Republic of Belarus believes in the principles of sovereign equality of states, non-use

of force or the threat of force, inviolability of borders, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in internal affairs and other universally recognized norms of international law. Our Constitution contains a provision that Belarus should be a neutral State and its territory a nuclear-free zone. Our Republic is ready to cooperate with the whole world and is seeking its rightful place in Europe in the regional structures of collective security and economic cooperation.

The President and the Government of the Republic of Belarus believe that implementation of market reforms will guarantee success in the democratic transformations in our society. We have embarked on this path firmly and irreversibly. The legal and organizational bases for moving to the socially oriented market economy have now been created in the Republic. Appropriate legislation has been enacted. The ideas of having a state of law, dividing power into different branches and improving the system of executive authority are now being put into practice.

However, as in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, transition to a market economy is very difficult. Our greatest difficulties occur in privatization, fighting monopolies and stabilizing the monetary-financial system. Moreover, we inherited from the past a national economic structure in which an excessively large share was given to the military-industrial complex. Internal and external national debt is also high, leading to budget deficits and inflation.

The situation is aggravated by the long-term consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. The adverse effect of the unprecedented radioactive contamination on people's health is not decreasing. On the contrary, it increases as this tragic day recedes. On top of all of this, we had a drought this year the likes of which our country had not seen for at least 100 years. Modest estimates put the overall damage from the drought at more than $300 million.

Under these difficult circumstances, the Republic has elaborated a programme of measures for pulling the economy out of crisis. This programme will be the basis for an agreement with the International Monetary Fund, which we plan to sign sometime next month. Firmly resolved to carry out wide-scale reforms, we intend to curb inflation, reduce the budget deficit and reduce the deficit in the balance of payments. Full liberalization of trade and prices, speeding up privatization, should, we think, make it possible to lessen the crisis in our economy. Relying on our own forces, we nevertheless understand that without support from the outside we cannot carry out our reforms fully and in a reasonably short time.

The Republic of Belarus does not intend to withdraw into its own problems. We are open to the concerns, anxieties and problems of the whole world, and we wish to make our own contribution to the activities of the world community of nations. Not just rhetorically, but in reality, Belarus was the first State in history voluntarily, without reservations or conditions, to renounce the possession of nuclear weapons. We support proposals on the indefinite and unconditional extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

In 1990, from this rostrum, the delegation of the Republic of Belarus put forward the idea of establishing a nuclear-free belt from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Recent steps taken by Belarus to withdraw nuclear weapons from its territory ahead of schedule make it possible to consider a substantial part of this region as nuclear-free territory already.

Belarus supports the efforts by Members of the United Nations to speed up the negotiations on concluding a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. We believe such a treaty could be signed as early as next year. We also support the proposal made here to elaborate a treaty on nuclear security and strategic stability. And, of course, we advocate multilateral discussion of issues relating to regulating the international arms market and military equipment.

I would like to stress that, despite our economic crisis, our Republic is endeavouring to comply fully with our obligations to reduce nuclear and conventional weapons, even though this requires enormous additional expenditures. In this connection, we feel we can expect the international community to support our actions.

The noble quest of peoples for peace following the Second World War led to the establishment of the United Nations. The people of Belarus paid a great price in delivering of world from fascism. The deadly fires of war scorched our land and touched literally every family in it. The tragic price of freedom was the life of every fourth citizen in my country. Not until 25 years after the war did our population once again attain its pre-war level. Thus, the General Assembly's decision to make 1995 the United Nations year of tolerance and to proclaim it the world year of commemoration of victims of the Second World War evokes a particularly profound response in Belarus. The Belarus delegation also

considers that next year would be the appropriate time to delete from the United Nations Charter the outdated concept of the "enemy State".

We must use the forthcoming United Nations golden jubilee to seek new ways of improving our performance in the changed world conditions. It is a truism that nature cannot tolerate rigidity and that everything in nature is constantly changing. That law is certainly applicable to the United Nations. If the Organization is to work effectively, its major organs must undergo profound reform.

In the application of the principle of representation of countries and regions in the Security Council, the interests of all groups of States, including the Eastern European Group, must be taken more fully into account. Of course, no Security Council reform should detract from its role as the body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, so needed by all Member States, and particularly the smaller States.

The Government of the Republic of Belarus has reacted positively to the proposal to increase the number of permanent members of the Security Council with the addition of members selected from among the countries that make an exceptional contribution to achieving the purposes of the United Nations Charter.

We believe that greater account should be taken of existing realities, including the complex problems confronting countries whose economies are in transition and the poorest countries, as well as of global problems of population, unemployment and environmental deterioration in all parts of the world.

Political and economic dialogue between donor and recipient countries must be given new content, going beyond the traditional framework of relations between them.

The Republic of Belarus hopes that the movement that began in the Philippines at the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies and developed further at Managua will make it possible for countries in transition and developing countries to unite and to develop a coordinated approach within the framework of the United Nations to consolidate democracy and create a free market.

Countries with economies in transition find themselves at different stages on their road to democracy and a market economy, and for that reason the success of reforms depends to a large extent on support from the international community. Hence, the Belarus delegation would propose that in 1996, under the auspices of the United Nations, an international conference on sustainable development in countries with economies in transition should be held. Co-organizers of the conference might include the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the European Regional Bureau of the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other interested institutions.

We also believe that the granting of most-favoured-nation status, giving countries with economies in transition broad access to international markets and integrating them fully into the world economy, would be in the interests of the international community as a whole.

There is a growing need to broaden cooperation and strengthen coordination between the United Nations, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and other regional organizations and arrangements. In this connection we welcome the granting of observer status in the General Assembly to the Commonwealth of Independent States. Belarus advocates a clearer definition of areas of cooperation between the United Nations and the CIS. Such cooperation could include joint efforts in peacemaking, disarmament, the environment, anti-terrorism, drug control and industrial conversion.

We believe that peace-keeping operations should not be allowed to overshadow the crucial problems of socio-economic development. Administrative and financial reform must become the most important aspect of United Nations renewal. One way of achieving that would be through a more rational distribution of the financial burden between the United Nations and other international institutions, including regional organizations. Another way would be to reject existing approaches to calculating the scale of assessments of Member States for the regular budget of the United Nations and for peace-keeping operations. It would be fairer to assess the contributions of States primarily in light of their actual capacity to pay.

In conclusion, may I say that the general debate at this session attests to the genuine interest of Member States in achieving the full realization of the United Nations potential as a truly effective international

organization, as a centre for harmonizing and coordinating the activities of the nations of the world. The Republic of Belarus fully shares that commitment and is ready to cooperate with all countries of the world community to achieve that goal, so that the end of this century may go down in history as the time when the aspirations and hopes of all mankind were finally met.

The President *(interpretation from Spanish)*: On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Mikhail Chygir, Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus was escorted from the rostrum.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.